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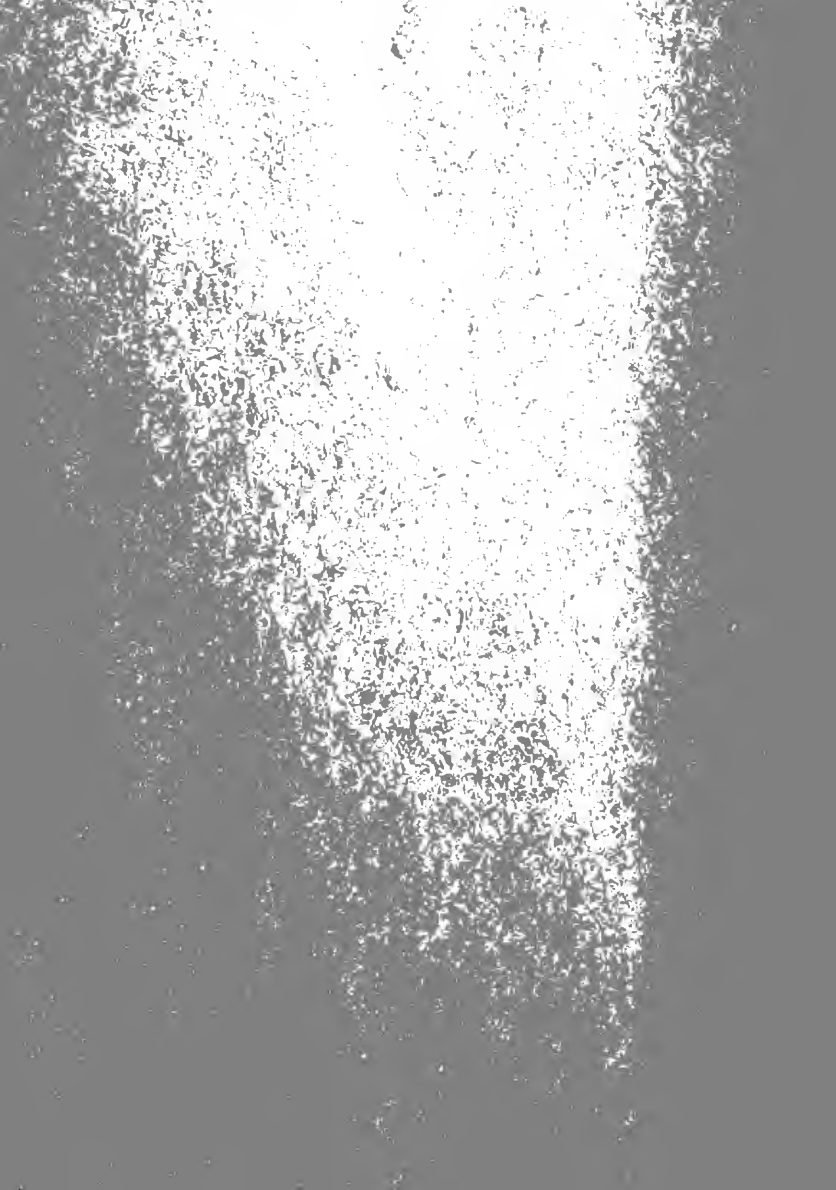
FISH—SKETCH OF THE FIELD OF PRACTICAL SHORT-HAND





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❁ A SKETCH ❁

OF

Practical ❁

Short-Hand.



❁ By JAMES H. FISH. ❁

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Dec 7, 1903  
A SKETCH

OF

The Field of Practical Short-Hand,

WITH PROSPECTUS OF FISH'S SCHOOL OF SHORT-HAND,

AND ALSO

PLAN OF INSTRUCTION BY MAIL,

*Geo. H. Sherris*

For the Information of those who wish to learn the Art.

*July '93*

*Brooklyn N.Y.*

BY JAMES H. FISH,

Stenographer to the United States Courts in New York  
and Brooklyn.

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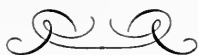
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THE purpose of this book is to lay before the public a sketch of the field of practical short-hand in such a way that persons looking towards it for occupation may, with some degree of intelligence, judge of the situation.



# PRACTICAL SHORT-HAND.



## Professional Work.

**P**ROFESSIONAL Stenographic work in the City of New York comprises, in the main, the reporting of trials and legal proceedings in courts of law and before referees, arbitrators, and committees; and amanuensis work, or the writing of dictations in law offices, insurance offices, banking offices and in other large business establishments; and this statement applies, with some modifications, to every city in this country. In addition to this, a vast amount of literary and professional work is accomplished by the aid of this art.

In the City of New York every court is provided with its stenographer, whose duty it is to make a verbatim report of the trial. These receive salaries ranging from two to three thousand dollars per year, depending somewhat upon the rank of the court; and in addition to the salary, the stenographer receives fees for transcripts of his notes, determined by the amount of work done. The total compensation of the official reporter of a court may be stated approximately as from twenty-five hundred to three thousand dollars and upwards.

Great as is the number of cases tried in court, it is probable that a still greater number are tried out of court, before referees and commissioners. Almost all of these are reported in the same manner as cases tried in court, and the stenographer in general practice is employed for the purpose. His compensation is entirely by fees received according to the amount of work done; the usual rate being twenty-five cents per folio (100 words). The annual income of a reporter having a good practice in this field is from three thousand dollars upwards.

## The Law Reporter's Work.

CERTAIN classes of cases are referred by the courts to lawyers, before whom they are tried out of court, the method of procedure being precisely the same as if the trial were before a judge. The "hearings" occupy from one to two or three hours, and are usually at intervals of a week. Depending upon the nature of the suit and the amount of detail and the intricacy and character of the subject matter; the trial of these "references" continues from two or three months to three or four years. The stenographer takes the testimony, and transcribes it within a day or two after the session, so that the counsel may have opportunity to examine it before the subsequent hearing. The record of testimony in such cases varies in amount from two or three hundred folios to five or six thousand folios.

Stenographers of State Courts are appointed by the judges; their duty being to keep a short-hand record of

proceedings at all trials in the courts to which they are attached, the compensation for that service being paid by the State or City. The minutes are not written out unless called for by either party to the suit, and a fee regulated by statute is paid therefor by the party requiring them.

The United States Courts are not provided by law with stenographers, but in certain districts, particularly New York and Brooklyn, the two most important judicial districts of the United States, the judges select a stenographer whom they recognize as the official reporter of the causes tried there. The rate and mode of compensation are the same as in reference cases.

The stenographer who reports the cases does not, as a rule, write out his own notes, but employs short-hand amanuenses for that purpose, dictating his notes to such assistants, to be by them turned into long-hand. The great bulk of stenographic reports were, until a comparatively recent date, written in long-hand, sometimes in legal cap form, which is a very clumsy way; or more often in folio book form. Now, however, the transcript is commonly made by the type-writer, the stenographer either dictating to a rapid operator and finishing the work as he goes along, or employing a short-hand amanuensis skilled in the use of the type-writer, who first takes the dictation in short-hand, and then transcribes by the writing machine.

The reporter who takes notes all day in court, say from eleven o'clock to four, will have equal to 125 or 175 pages of fools cap or legal cap, if written in long-hand, and more often than otherwise he is required to produce a copy of

his notes for the use of counsel next morning before the opening of court. This requires the employment of several short-hand amanuenses (from three to five or six), who, after taking notes from the reporter, proceed to write them out. It is not an unusual thing that a trial will last many days and even weeks, necessitating the daily writing out of the report.

These reports when properly made, are word for word reproductions of the questions of counsel and answers of witnesses, together with a concise and accurate statement of all other proceedings upon the trial; the important matter being that the testimony shall be reported with absolute accuracy and without omission.

An instance of the way in which reporting of important trials is done will perhaps be interesting to those who have never had the opportunity to observe or know how such work is done. Take, for example, the the trial of the famous case of the United States of America *vs.* JAMES D. FISH, President of the late Marine Bank of New York. The trial was reported by the writer of this sketch with the aid of a large number of assistants, and occupied about five weeks. The stenographer in charge took *verbatim* notes of the proceedings of the entire day; an equally competent reporter took notes with him for one hour, and was then relieved by another assistant, the entire day being thus divided into four or five nearly equal portions or "takes." As the gentleman who took the first hour "take" was relieved by a successor, he would proceed to the reporters' room and dictate his notes to stenographic

amanuenses, who transcribed them as rapidly as possible upon the type-writer. This method was followed by each reporter as he came out of court with his "take." This mode of dividing the day permitted the transcribing of the proceedings to begin very soon after the opening of court, so that by the employment of a large number of amanuenses to write out the reporters' dictations the whole day's proceedings would be very nearly completed at the adjournment of court. On the other hand, the reporter in charge being there and taking a duplicate set of notes of the whole day without interruption, responded to the calls of the court or counsel for the reading of any portions of the minutes during the day, and it was his duty also at the close of the day to examine and complete the report as transcribed by the assistants who had relieved one another during the day.

The amanuenses employed on this work transcribed their notes by the type-writer upon specially prepared paper with lithographing ink. Such errors as were found upon revision were corrected by erasure with a rubber, and the corrections written in by the type-writer. The copy as thus prepared was transferred to lithgraphing stones and printed by the lithographers upon linen paper in book form, and ten copies of each page were made.

By this method the stenographers' work was completed, including revision and correction, at varying hours of the evening from seven to ten. The lithographers' work began as soon as the first fifteen or twenty pages of copy were ready, and the printing completed by one or two o'clock

in the morning. By eight o'clock in the morning the copy was put in order by the stenographers' clerks, and delivered at nine A. M. to the lawyers engaged in the trial. This was the method employed each day of the trial, and a complete *verbatim* report of unfailing accuracy of each day's proceedings was delivered on the next morning. The number of persons actually employed day by day upon the report of the trial as above described was from seventeen to twenty, including court reporters, short-hand amanuenses, and lithographers.

Of course this is not the usual manner of procedure in reporting cases in court, which is that the reporter takes notes all day, and works late into the night with amanuenses, or takes notes for a half day, and is then relieved by an associate who takes the remainder, thus dividing each day's labor.

## Reporting Speed.

IN legal reporting, the speed varies from 75 or 80 words per minute to 200 or more, depending very much upon the habit of speech of both lawyer and witness; and there is seldom found either of these parties to an examination who will not at times put his question or deliver his answer very rapidly. In every day's work the speed is almost certain to range from the lowest to the highest figures named; the average per minute for one or two hours often being 150 words.

An experienced stenographer will scarcely undertake to state what speed he is capable of, because he knows that



the necessities of particular occasions bring out his best ability in that respect, and will often carry him to so swift a pace that he would not venture to assert it as a speed he could depend upon, even if there were any way by which he could determine the number of words per minute, as for instance if he were timed by the watch.

## Experts.

OF the numerous short-hand writers in cities like New York, San Francisco, Washington, Boston, Chicago and Buffalo, those who are sufficiently skilled for professional reporting are comparatively few. Of these, those who are in the truer sense of the word experts—equal by reason of their manual skill, alertness of mind, and general information, to the most difficult emergencies of legal and scientific reporting—are still more rare.

## Amanuensis Work and the Demand.

IN learning this art, however, the matter of the skill requisite for emergencies need not be taken into account by the student, any more than should one contemplating the study of medicine speculate upon the possibility of his becoming of the highest authority in the profession, as having weight in determining whether or not he should proceed with his study; for, although many stenographic reporters

are required, there is great demand for a still larger number of stenographic amanuenses. The employment of this art for business and professional purposes has become so general that the supply of thoroughly competent amanuenses is not and has not been for some time past equal to the demand. The employment of short-hand amanuenses by stenographic reporters constitutes a considerable field in itself, and there is also difficulty in obtaining sufficiently rapid and accurate stenographic clerks for general business service. The latter are employed at salaries ranging from six hundred dollars to twelve hundred per year, and sometimes more, depending upon the character of the business and the ability of the stenographer.

The regular fee paid amanuenses for taking dictation from stenographic reporters and making a transcript is six cents per hundred words, in New York.

This class of work, namely, taking dictation from stenographic reporters, is something the value of which, as a means of acquiring experience for all other kinds of work, as well as being also a stepping-stone to the highest position among *verbatim* reporters, is not always taken into account by persons seeking to enter the field of short-hand; and every young short-hand writer in cities where stenographic reporters are to be found should, in my opinion, lose no opportunity of doing work of this kind, as its experience-giving value is inestimable to such a person, in this: that it at once tests the young writer's accuracy and speed, and affords the very best opportunity to learn how practical men in the business do their work.

I have said that the supply of competent amanuenses is not equal to the demand. It is true that there are many people who have some knowledge of short-hand, and some sort of skill, who cannot find employment, but it is because of their incompetency, and not by reason of an over supply. The lawyer, banker, stenographer, insurance official, or merchant, who has documents or correspondence to dictate cannot employ a half educated, incompetent person for the purpose. I have met a far greater number of incompetent people who offered their services as reporters and amanuenses than have I of those thoroughly skilful. There is room for good workmen; there are too many bad ones.

## Dictation Speed.

THE amanuensis should write short-hand at the rate of 65 to 100 words per minute, and should read his writing accurately and rapidly. Uncertainty as to the meaning of particular outlines is fatal to accuracy. The amanuensis should be able to transcribe these notes into a neat, legible long-hand; and should also be able to use the type-writer. A good common school education is sufficient. Habitual bad spelling or bad grammar are not admissible, even in the case of a college graduate.

## Women as Stenographers.

WHILE the heaviest stenographic reporting is done by men, it is a field in which women have shown themselves

exceedingly apt and skilful. In New York City there are several of remarkable ability, who are doing the most difficult reporting. But as amanuenses, women have been found most acceptable in every department of business. Of course they are not better fitted for this business than men, but considerable experience with women as amanuenses and reporters in my own employ, and extensive observation of their employment in the professions and in business generally as stenographic clerks, proves to me that they not only easily become as skilful as men, but being subjected to sharp competition, are driven to the exercise of habitually greater care in their work, and are as a rule found always faithful to the duties of their position. To use the expression of a well known lawyer in seeking a stenographic clerk, "The women mind their business better."

The truth is that the haste of young men to make \$5,000 a year after six months' study and practice is so great they neglect to earn \$600 first.

## Is Short-Hand Difficult to Learn?

THE impression prevails that short-hand is intricate, laborious, and to all but a few, an art impossible to acquire. This view is not correct, if a suitable text-book be used by the student under proper direction and tuition. Of the many failures to learn short-hand, this unfortunate result has been traceable either to the voluminous material and faulty plans of work on the subject, or the impractical method of instruction.

No one, in my opinion, should attempt to learn short-hand without a teacher. The majority of self-taught students acquire faulty methods and habits of writing which never can be overcome. Self-teaching always leads to an unnecessary amount of labor and immense waste of time, even if the effort be finally successful; but rarely a practical result is attained.

## Personal Experience.

MANY expert stenographers of this day believe from their own experience, that from five to seven years are required to make a good stenographer. My own experience as a student was probably not unlike theirs, and yet what I have aided others to accomplish proves that the method by which I, after much unnecessary hard work, learned the art was absolutely the wrong way. A short chapter from my own book of experience will show the difficulties under which I labored. As a lad a standard work on phonography was put into my hands, and I studied it for a few months, when for some reason I gave it up. Years afterward, having lost the result of my former attempt, I renewed the study with a still more modern standard text-book. Without the aid of a teacher or the advice of a practical, professional short-hand writer, I studied the theory and practiced upon it from two to three hours per day, six days in the week, for something over three years, during all that time blindly hoping for a good result, and yet refraining

from communicating with those who might have materially aided me. Having attained a supposed speed of somewhere from 150 to 180 words per minute, I applied to the stenographic reporters of New York for employment. The first attempt was a short dictation of, say, half a dozen pages of legal cap manuscript. The dictation was given slowly and carefully, and probably at about the rate of 55 or 60 words a minute. Fortunately I was not asked to read it on the spot. I reached home and read and wrote and re-read and re-wrote it from seven o'clock in the evening until after two o'clock in the morning, and I presented the work the next morning to the gentleman who gave it, my old friend Mr. HENRY M. PARKHURST, of the City of New York (by the way, the first in this country to write phonography), and after examining it critically, from first word to last, and from comma to period, stated that he was inclined to consider it fairly well done. Even in this instance, however, the chances of my complete failure were as twenty to one, and nothing but good fortune, and a desperate intention to succeed in the work which had been my ambition for many years, enabled me to succeed upon this trial.

## Who Should Learn Short-Hand.

OF course the chief use of short-hand is for business purposes. But in addition to that I believe every student should learn it, as an aid in advanced study. He will find it especially useful in taking his notes in college or seminary.

It is desirable that the theological student should become thoroughly familiar with it, not only for the purpose of ordinary note taking during the progress of his studies, but for the sake of the great assistance it will be to him in the preparation of all his literary work ; for thoughts can be so much more rapidly transferred to paper by means of short-hand, than by the ordinary mode of writing, and so much more of the subject matter can be brought within the range of the eye in a given space, it being more compact and legible than long-hand.

The law student will find it not only of the greatest use in his study, but throughout his entire professional work. Any one who watches the trial of causes in courts, sees either the lawyer or his clerk busy making fragmentary notes of testimony which is being given ten times faster than he can follow. Here the advantage of knowing short-hand is unquestioned.

Some years ago it came to the notice of the writer that an eminent Judge in the City of New York was using, as an aid in making minutes of trials, as much as he could remember of phonography, learned by an old-fashioned method over twenty years ago. I proposed to him instruction by the method we were then and are now teaching ; to this he assented, and for three or four years past he has made for his own use as a Judge voluminous minutes in short-hand of the trials at which he presided, as this Judge's official minute book will show ; and those minutes are now, as occasion may require, transcribed by the reporters in our office.

The *New York Tribune*, a few months ago, contained the following paragraph :

“ Lord ROSEBERRY, speaking of ‘ Volapük,’ says that he regards “ with awe the scheme for elaborating a language for international correspondence ; but he does firmly believe that within a century correspondence in the same tongue will be carried on in some form of “ short-hand, and that the stress and pressure of public life will make “ it a necessity.”

This is a very significant remark. One hundred years hence may find that such a revolution as here indicated will have swept the present cumbrous, arbitrary and illegible forms of written communication out of existence. But for the present it calls to our attention very vividly the immense pressure upon the men who do the world’s work, and which requires that there shall be within their reach the means of communicating their thoughts to paper as rapidly as they can formulate them in their minds. The short-hand writer has become for this reason one of the most important aids to the professional and the business man. A competent short-hand amanuensis triples and quadruples the business man’s ability to transact business, and such assistance is becoming yearly in greater demand. Complicated machinery, such as the electric or magnetic writing machine, has been devised towards meeting this pressing demand of the times. Marvelous mechanical results have been attained, but as yet there is no serviceable result visible which gives even a fair promise of practical success for such machinery. The peculiarity of the work which the short-hand writer has to do, is *discriminating intelligence*. That being the fact, no machinery can be used in such work without the aid of



the same quality and amount of brains that are now required of the short-hand writer.

The day, in our opinion, can never come, and that for the most obvious reasons, when the short-hand writer, skilled in his art and trained in the ways of business, can be supplanted by a machine.

## Conditions of Success.

THE question who is adapted for this work is important. I do not by any means say that every body is suited to it as a business. I consider the requisites and conditions of success to be about as follows: 1st. An intelligent, fairly educated, thoroughly industrious student of either sex. 2d. A work on short-hand, the basis of the theory of which is phonetics, and that work to be the most simple presentation of the materials of short-hand and their theory which it is possible to produce. 3. Instruction by a teacher, and that teacher to be not simply a theorist, but a theorist who has had practical experience in professional work. These requirements fulfilled, by devoting three hours a day, a pupil will acquire the ability to write short-hand perfectly in three months, and in three months more attain such skill as will enable him or her to do well the work of an amanuensis.

## Systems of Short-Hand.

THE systems of short-hand writing devised since TYRO wrote CICERO'S orations in some sort of abbreviated writing,

number up to the present time several hundreds. A large portion of these are arbitrary arrangements of signs which save time in writing. Scores of systems have been arranged which have a basis of systematic theory, but which in development and use are also more or less arbitrary.

A little over fifty years ago ISAAC PITMAN formulated the phonetic theory of writing and devised a phonographic system. From this system have been developed, since his own, BENN PITMAN'S, GRAHAM'S, MUNSON'S and BURNS' systems of phonography. All of these systems have remarkably skillful representatives in practical short-hand now. There are to-day in New York short-hand writers whose skill, swiftness and competency are unquestioned in their profession, representing every one of these five. It cannot truthfully be said, therefore, that either one of these five systems of short-hand will produce, because of its use, a better short-hand writer than any of the others. This, however, is true of the most modern standard systems, viz., that they are all founded upon and are the outgrowth of the phonetic system formulated and devised by ISAAC PITMAN. Each is supposed to have, and undoubtedly does have, some advantages in respect of arrangement or of practical use over the parent system; so that the advantage of one over another must depend upon the way in which it is arranged and presented in its textbook.

We think it may be correctly and justly said that Mr. JAMES E. MUNSON'S work on short-hand was, when published, a better arranged book for instruction and put forth

a better presentation of the subject than any text-book previously given to the public.

The same is true of the system still later published by Mrs. E. B. BURNS. This last is the text-book and the system taught by our school, with such modifications as our experience approves. We do not desire, nor are we called upon, to say that this system is better than every other. The reason we teach this system is, that it has in all respects been proved to be as swift, as accurate, and as legible as the best of all the others, and is the system by the use of which in our school we have produced unsurpassed, and in some respects unequalled, results.

When you meet a stenographer the inquiry is, How GOOD A WORKMAN? The question, what system he uses, is of little importance. When a person desires to learn shorthand, then, the question of *means* to be employed is of the utmost importance. For in the old fashioned way of procedure, hundreds attempted to learn the art where one actually acquired it. An inquiry of this one successful person among the hundreds of failures would show his experience to be appalling to the beginner. In these days a better method prevails, and competent teachers can be found for instruction in simpler systems of writing.

## The Teacher of Short-Hand.

A SINGLE suggestion as to the teacher of this useful art. First of all, employ some one whom you have reason

to believe has ability to give instruction, and who also can show some record of accomplishment and skill as a practical worker in the business of short-hand writing ; and lastly, be very careful not to be tempted by the statements of persons who will offer to teach you a worthy art in a few weeks, and also guarantee you a remunerative position.



# SHORT-HAND.

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## FISH'S METHOD OF INSTRUCTION

**BY MAIL.**

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## PROSPECTUS.

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JAMES H. FISH,  
MRS. C. E. BROCKWAY, }

Instructors.

{ MISS EMILY F. ANGELL,  
{ MRS. S. A. BROWNELL.

---

### OFFICE :

No. 229 BROADWAY, FIRST FLOOR, NEW YORK CITY.

### SCHOOL :

FRANKLIN BUILDING, No. 186 REMSEN STREET, NEAR COURT STREET,  
BROOKLYN.

---

Address : JAMES H. FISH, P. O. Box 138, New York.



# PLAN OF INSTRUCTION BY MAIL.

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The Student is furnished as follows :

1. The Text Book, " Burns' Phonic Short-hand."
2. Our own Scheme of Instruction, comprising the fullest and simplest directions for study.
3. The stationery and materials for study and practice, being the same as those used by us in our professional work.

## Method.

THE method of procedure is: The student having mastered the matter of the sounds, proceeds to learn and practice upon the signs and following lessons, and as he progresses to the best result which he is able to attain upon each successive lesson, he sends to us, by mail, his test sheet of that lesson, with any and every question which may arise in his work. By return of mail, a letter is sent, answering his questions and returning the test sheet with its corrections.

## Term of Study.

STUDENTS are enrolled at any time throughout the year and their term of study continues until the course is completed. The course is divided into five parts or sections, and the work is so arranged that a fair student, giving two or three hours per day without interruption, finishes each one in three weeks, thus requiring fifteen weeks to master the whole course. As matter of fact, the students who receive our instruction, are usually so occupied with business or other duties, that no specified amount of time can be devoted to study, and our system enables them to work upon it as time serves, completing the course as soon as they can, without limit of time.

## Charges.

FOR the entire course, including Text-Book and Materials, \$30.00.

## Payments.

The charge of \$30.00 is divided into five payments, the first one being \$10, and each subsequent one \$5; the payments being made at the beginning of the several sections.

This amount is an invariable charge, without addition for subsequent supplies of stationery during the course.



## Advantages of the Plan.

1. THE simplest system of Standard Phonography that has been produced.

2. Instruction by teachers who have been and are practitioners of the Art of Short-hand upon a large scale in the chief city in the United States for law reporting, and who have made the professional practice of Short-hand a success for many years.

3. A system of instruction verified by constant written examination, the advantage of which is, that every pupil has cumulative files of instruction for reference.

4. The saving of time to busy persons, that would be consumed in going to and from oral lessons.

5. The application to immediate practical purposes of every principle acquired. As soon as a new principle is learned, the student is taught to use it in conjunction with every other one previously acquired. The result is that our students are *actually writing short-hand* within two weeks of beginning study.

6. The course completed, the student is in possession of skill to write anything perfectly in the "reporting" style of short-hand. We have no cumbrous stages such as "Corresponding Style," "Semi-Reporting Style," and "Advanced Reporting Style." What is suitable for *reporting* is also for *correspondence*, and our students will use the same short-hand for all purposes from the beginning.

7. Our text-book and course of instruction supply the student with all that is necessary, without the subsequent use of dictionaries or manuals of set forms; it being left to the judgment and good sense of every writer to construct his or her own "outlines" by applying to the ample materials acquired in study, the principles learned at the same time.

## How Long Will it Take ?

WE do not know and shall not undertake to predict in any particular case. All depends on the student's ability and the amount of time given to study. We have had students complete the course and learn to write short-hand perfectly but slowly in two months, and in one case a student by mail, distant two hundred and fifty miles, completed the course in one month, giving all her time to it. But while it is intended to be a fifteen weeks' task, the majority of students cannot control sufficient time for study, and are more likely to take much longer than fifteen weeks.

All we say is, this is a fifteen weeks' course by mail for a good student, giving two or three hours per day. Our undertaking is simply to give such a course of instruction as will enable a pupil to write perfectly legible, compact short-hand, no matter how quickly or slowly he may chose to study. When the pupil can write short-hand as we write it, we have accomplished our purpose. On completing the course our students write from 35 to 65 words a minute, and increase of speed comes by practice from dictation.

## Can Positions be Obtained?

AGAIN that depends upon the person. Good short-hand writers are and always will be in demand, and competent ones always find positions. Many establishments are doing without because good ones cannot be had.

## What We Agree to Do.

1. To give our students such instruction as only experienced and competent stenographers can give; our teachers being accomplished workers in practical short-hand.
2. To teach every student to write short-hand *well*, by the time this course of instruction above outlined is complete, although the rate of speed then will not be great, and must be increased by practice.
3. Any students who for any reason do not appear competent to go through to a successful completion of the course will be so advised, and their tuition fees returned, less the actual expense to us of books and stationery used.

## The Question of Good Faith.

WE received recently a very significant letter, of which a copy is appended, the name and address being omitted:

— —, Va., Jan. 28, 1888.

MR. J. H. FISH :

DEAR SIR.—Your “Sketch of Practical Short-Hand” received.

I am particularly anxious to learn short-hand as soon as possible.

Will you please be so kind as to answer a few questions. After a young lady has acquired this art, what is the next best step for utilizing it?

What salary is usually paid for an amanuensis? and by whom are they mostly employed? After my course is completed, and if you are pleased with the result, will you do me the favor to aid me in securing a position?

When must the first \$10 be paid.

Now, sir, I am depending entirely upon an advertisement, being absolutely ignorant of both you and your method. You know as well as I do that very few advertisements pay, so I beg pardon for entertaining some doubt as to the solid worth of this one. Of course you are safe, as you get all or a part of your money before the work is completed; the question is, I must trust you. If I get “value received” I would not regret spending twice the amount.

Please assure me that you will do your *whole duty*, will give me an intelligent understanding of short-hand, and I'll gladly pay, and thank you.

Very respectfully,

N — P —.

With one exception, we think the questions raised by the above letter are fully answered in the Sketch. The main question here is, however, as to the honesty and good faith of our establishment. The trouble is that the public prints are full of advertisements offering instruction in important departments of the useful arts, and holding out extravagant inducements to people to pay their money upon some guarantee of positions when courses of study are completed. It is so evident to every thoughtful person that guarantees of this kind are impossible (and therefore

fraudulent) that it leads to strict and careful inquiry as to the good faith of those who are actually responsible in all their undertakings. We prefer to have the questions frankly raised, as in this letter, because it justifies us in calling attention to our continuous business history of fourteen years in the practice of short-hand in the City of New York, in the service of the legal profession at large, of the law departments of the United States Government, of the State of New York, and of the cities of New York and Brooklyn, and also of the courts of the United States in New York and Brooklyn, in three of which Mr. FISH and his assistants are now the official stenographers.

We think also that the letters from former pupils and from professional and literary men, published in our Sketch, are worthy of consideration by those who desire to judge of our good faith. We will at any time, upon application, give the addresses of persons who have taken our course, many of whom are now engaged in the business.

## Our Students.

THEY are persons from 15 to 50 years of age, ladies and gentlemen; they are students, teachers, clerks, business men, secretaries of corporations; they are usually people of little leisure, who give half an hour or more per day to the study of phonography. They push along as rapidly as possible, and some of our best students have been unable, by reason of various hindrances, to complete inside of a year.

Our School comprises students in New York City and State, New Jersey, New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, District of Columbia, Indiana, Ohio, Iowa, Minnesota, Nebraska, Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, Washington Territory, California, Texas, Louisiana, and other States.

## Success of the School.

AFTER several years of oral teaching, this present method was adopted several years ago, and has been and is conducted in conjunction with a very large practice in law reporting. Our long established connections entitled us to the confidence of those to whom our Plan of Instruction was first offered, but we present it now to those who wish to learn the art, as an institution which has won success in its undertakings in every part of this country, and possesses the good will and confidence of every pupil upon its rolls.

# Oral Instruction in Short-Hand,

DAY AND EVENING.

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## FISH'S SCHOOL OF SHORT-HAND

FOR

TECHNICAL AND PRACTICAL INSTRUCTION IN

Short-Hand and Type-Writing,

FRANKLIN BUILDING, No. 186 REMSEN STREET, NEAR COURT STREET,

↪ Brooklyn, N. Y. ↪

JAMES H. FISH,  
MRS. C. E. BROCKWAY, }

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INSTRUCTORS:

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{ MISS EMILY F. ANGELL,  
MRS. S. A. BROWNELL,

Separate Instruction for Each Student.

---

✦ HOURS. ✦

9:00 A. M. to 5 P. M. and 7:30 P. M. to 9 P. M.

---

STUDENTS MAY SELECT SUCH HOURS AS SUIT THEMSELVES.





# FISH'S SCHOOL OF SHORT-HAND.

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FOR many years we have given oral instruction in the office where our general business is done, but have now separated the instruction from contact with our general office work.

Our school is opened in response to a demand by the public for honest and faithful service in teaching short-hand, the type-writer, and all matters of detail connected with this business.

Short-hand writing has become one of the most important departments of industrial art in all the great cities. Of the persons who study short-hand without a teacher, very few succeed in becoming efficient, practical workers; and the successful ones do so only after a long period of hard work and after many disappointments in the attempt to put what they have learned to practical use. The few who succeed in this way by no means supply the demand for competent short-hand writers in all the departments of business in which their services are required: and it being possible now to obtain good practical instruction, the old method of acquiring short-hand without a teacher is almost entirely abandoned.

The public demand is not alone for instruction, but that the School shall have experienced, practical short-hand writers as teachers, and also the practical facilities for dealing thoroughly and justly with those who come to it for instruction.

This School is located in the FRANKLIN BUILDING, 186 Remsen Street, Brooklyn, near Court Street, a new and commodious building.

Students may select their own hours for study, between 9 A. M. and 5 P. M., on such regular days of the week as may suit their convenience. Each student will be dealt with separately, or small classes formed, as circumstances and progress require.

We propose to so train our pupils in the details of practical work, as a part of their course of instruction, that they will be able to do intelligently the work of any business house in which they may obtain a position, and that we may be able conscientiously to recommend them for employment.

In offering the advantages of our School to the public, we wish to be distinctly understood as declining to guarantee a position to any student. We desire only such students as have a sufficient appreciation of the value and importance of this work to be willing to pay fairly for the advantages we offer.

It must be obvious to all who read the promises issued by different people who advertise instruction in various branches of industrial work, that the inducements commonly held out, of absolutely certain employment after a very limited amount of study, are misleading and unfair.

## What We Agree to Do.

1. To GIVE our students such instruction as only experienced and competent stenographers can give, our teachers being accomplished workers in practical short-hand.

2. To carry that instruction into thorough training for practical work of the business of short-hand, including the use of the type-writer, and an acquaintance with business methods.

## Terms.

FOR the entire course, fitting the pupil for a business position, including both short-hand and type-writer, seventy-five dollars.

No extra charges of any kind whatever.

No limitation as to time in which to accomplish the full course, except that each student will be required to give such regular and careful attention to his work as we consider necessary for progress.

Tuition fees are to be paid in five payments of fifteen dollars each.

## Special Terms.

1. WE are prepared to offer instruction in short-hand alone at fifteen dollars per month. No extras for books or

materials, 2. A three months course of instruction on the type-writer, two hours practice each day, for twenty dollars.

## Practice.

As soon as the pupils become competent to write short-hand or upon type-writer from dictation, good readers will be in attendance to dictate.



## LETTERS.

The following letters came in the usual course of business, and without solicitation :

MR. JAMES H. FISH, *Room 138, P. O. Building, City.* :

DEAR SIR.—Will you kindly send to me one of your pamphlets, “A Sketch of Short-hand”? I have heard several inquiries lately about your course of instruction in short-hand, by correspondence. I am always pleased to recommend your method, as my own lessons under your tuition, were so very satisfactory.

Very respectfully,

(MISS) GERTRUDE E. CAMP,  
Care of M. J. PAILLARD & Co., 680 Broadway.

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GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN.

MR. FISH :

I enclose Declaration of Independence, having practised it until, upon writing it from dictation the seventh time, I reached 41 words per minute. I think I could have made it 45, easily, with another copy. and should have done so if my supply of paper had held out. Please forward a new supply as I shall need it, as I shall of course continue steady practice. What would be your terms for occasional criticism of work?

Respectfully,

B. L. GEER.

FLINT, MICH.

JAMES H. FISH:

SIR.—My papers, with corrections, were received to-day. I should have been discouraged with the numerous mistakes I had made, if you had not remarked that my work was not bad. I had no more than sent them when I realized I had made a mistake with the tick for *the*.

The instructions are so plain and the corrections and explanations are so clearly given, that I don't think I can make so many mistakes again.

I realize the fact that I should have contracted many bad habits in studying alone.

Respectfully, MINNIE W. GOSS.

JAMES H. FISH, Esq.:

\* \* \* \* \*

I have learned more by your instructions in the last letter than I should have found out by the book in a month.

Yours truly, C. P. RUSSELL,  
Culvert Block, Jackson, Mich.

MEDIA, DELAWARE CO., PA.

JAMES H. FISH, Esq.:

DEAR SIR.—Enclosed please find copy of "Declaration of Independence," written by myself (after some practice) at the rate of 60 to 65 words per minute. Some parts of it were written much faster, but other parts being written slower, of course, brought the average down.

I am getting along *very* well with my short-hand. Already I find it of great service to me, financially as well as otherwise.

*Many thanks for your kind and courteous explanations and corrections.*

Have you ever heard from a person by the name of — — —, of Wilkes-Barre, Pa., also from — — —, of Utica, New York? They wrote me in regard to your method of teaching and the system taught. It gave me great pleasure to recommend *both*. I wondered if they were under your instruction.

Very respectfully, E. F. BULLARD.

The following letters were solicited by us :

GREENVILLE, MICH.

MR. JAMES H. FISH :

DEAR SIR.—Your favor of the 25th ult. came duly to hand, and I most willingly comply with your request. You may use as much or as little of it as you may see fit.

Having taken a course of lessons by mail with Mr. J. H. FISH during the past winter, I can conscientiously recommend him and his method of teaching short-hand to all who, like myself, have but limited time and have not the advantage of an oral teacher. At the completion of the course, I was perfectly satisfied that the thoroughly understood the subject and the best manner of teaching it.

His treatment of me was perfect in every respect, and I feel warranted in saying, that all who have anything to do with Mr. FISH will find that he will do just as he agrees, and more too. It was simply a pleasure to me to take lessons with him, and the lessons did not drag along, but increased in interest with each succeeding one until the close, and when completed I did not regret the time, labor and expense to which I had been put.

Yours, most respectfully,

W. G. CLARK.

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GREEN BAY, WISCONSIN.

MR. JAMES H. FISH :

DEAR SIR.—Having completed your course in Phonic Short-hand, I am more than ever pleased with your plan of instruction by mail, and the prompt, thorough, careful manner in which your part of the work has been performed. I would advise others as I have two of my friends who think of studying short-hand, "Take lessons of Mr. FISH, and I am sure you will be satisfied."

Yours very truly,

B. L. GEER.

PASO DEL NORTE, MEXICO.

JAMES H. FISH, ESQ. :

MY DEAR SIR.—Yours of the 26th ult. is at hand. I am reluctant to advertise myself as a stenographer or even a student of stenography, until my success in this undertaking is somewhat assured; but I have every confidence in your method of instruction and wish you success in your efforts. After pursuing your course of instruction since the 1st of January, although at a great distance from you and suffering frequent interruptions caused by illness and business calls to distant points, I am surprised at the progress I have made—which is due to the thoroughness of your system and your painstaking and courteous relations with your student.

Very sincerely yours, ——— ———.

(Signature omitted by request.)

We are permitted by the writers to publish the following letters:

HARVARD UNIVERSITY, CAMBRIDGE, Mass.

We have been assured by good judges that Mr. JAMES H. FISH is a skilful stenographer and a competent teacher of Short-hand; and his method of giving instruction by mail seems to us practicable. We should therefore be glad to have his proposals made known to the Students of the University.

CHARLES W. ELIOT, *President.*

CHAS. F. DUNBAR, *Dean.*

*From Hon. CHAS. L. BENEDICT, Judge U. S. Court, Brooklyn, N. Y.*

To ——— ———:

I have had occasion to know Mr. JAS. H. FISH, and to observe his methods, and I cheerfully say \* \* \* that he will perform anything that he agrees to do.

CHAS. L. BENEDICT.

BROOKLYN.



*From Hon. ADDISON BROWN, Judge U. S. Court, New York.*  
To — — — :

Mr. JAMES H. FISH, the bearer, desires to submit to you some measures touching instruction in Stenography. \* \* \* He is the Stenographer in my Court, and I can bear the strongest testimony to his capacity. \* \* \* On his part you can rely upon it that all he undertakes will be performed.

---

*From Mr. CLAGHORN, Principal of the Brooklyn Bryant & Stratton Commercial School.*

Yours concerning the study of Phonography is at hand. In reply I would say that the fact that so large a proportion of those who undertake to learn it by the old methods fail, should not stand in your way. No professional or business man can afford to do without it.

Experienced Stenographers have, within a few years, wrought changes in its use, and I believe that the time and labor now required to learn it, is much less than heretofore.

Should you desire more particular information on the subject, I would advise you to communicate with Mr. JAS. H. FISH, Stenographer, United States Court House, this city.

Mr. FISH has a high reputation as a practical Stenographer, and I feel quite sure from my own personal acquaintance with him, and his plan of instructing by correspondence, that any one undertaking the study under his supervision, will be perfectly satisfied with the result.

C. CLAGHORN.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.

---

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

MR. C. CLAGHORN, *Brooklyn, N. Y.* :

DEAR SIR.—I see your name mentioned in JAMES H. FISH Stenographer book. I am anxious for my son to learn the business, and we have no school here that teach the Short-hand. They is so many ways

to get a man money nowadays without value recd, I thought I would write you and others, and see what you say about Mr. FISH and his manner of instruction on the Short-hand. His price am satisfide with if the man is all *O. K.* You will excuse me for trubling you in this matter, but hope you see my raisin for writing. Do not want to throw away 30\$ and get no benefit, and oblige

Yours truly,

\* \* \*

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ANSWER.

Mr. FISH will do all he agrees to. If your son secures Short-hand he will get that which will be worth one hundred times the money spent. You could not do a better thing nor deal with a better man.

C. CLAGHORN.

---

310 HALSEY ST., BROOKLYN, N. Y.

MR. JAMES. H. FISH:

DEAR SIR.—Will you kindly forward to my address two copies of your “Sketch of Practical Short-hand?” I wish always to have one on hand, as I find it is the clearest way of recommending your excellent system to others.

I have never had an opportunity of thanking you personally for the delightful position in which you placed me after I had completed the course with you.

I shall always recommend your system with heartiest good-will, and trust you may be able to place many in such positions as you procured for me.

With thanks and best wishes for your continued success,

Believe me, yours sincerely,

A. JENNY KIRKLAND.

FISH'S  
School of Short-hand,

FOR TECHNICAL AND PRACTICAL TRAINING IN SHORT-HAND AND  
TYPE-WRITING, FOR LEGAL AND GENERAL BUSINESS  
PURPOSES; UNDER THE INSTRUCTION AND  
SUPERVISION OF FISH'S CORPS  
OF PROFESSIONAL  
REPORTERS.

---

*We are receiving continually so many applications for information on various questions of practical moment to students, that the following statement is presented with a view to meeting such inquiries.*



# PRACTICAL SHORT-HAND.

---

## First Inquiry.

*What is the best system to use?*

ANSWER.—There are several systems which, when well learned, are adequate for any business or professional use of Short-hand; and, taking them in the order of time in which they came into use, they are: ISAAC PITMAN, BENN PITMAN, GRAHAM, MUNSON, BURNS.

Each of these systems has skillful and experienced representatives in the business of Short-hand in New York and other cities. Among these systems there is a great difference in the manner in which the subject is presented for the use of the students. Without referring specifically to the merits or defects of either of the others, it is only needful to state why our school teaches the BURNS system.

First—Experience in practical use by our own corps of reporters, as well as in commercial and professional use, has shown that it is, to say the least, as rapid and as accurate as the best of the others; secondly, its presentation by the text-book is as good in all respects as any other, and better

in some, in our opinion ; and, thirdly, we have never known Short-hand to be practically well learned so speedily as by the BURNS system as we teach it.

## Second Inquiry.

*Is the professional and commercial market open to the employment of persons who now learn Short-hand?*

ANSWER.—It most surely is, and it is a field for employment which is yearly growing wider. A vast number of banking houses, law offices, insurance companies, and general business establishments are open to the employment of good stenographic writers, at fair salaries for both men and women.

Experience in the City of New York has shown that for the rapid disposition of legal work and of general business matters the Short-hand writer is indispensable. All efforts to replace Short-hand writing by mechanical devices have been a complete failure, and, in my opinion, must continue to be a failure so long as brains are required in the doing of the work which is now entrusted to the stenographer. No machine has yet been devised which could approach in speed and accuracy the work of the phonographic writer. All writing machines are noisy and therefore create disturbance, and any machine which undertakes to register automatically vocal sounds will of necessity indicate also with as great accuracy sounds which were never intended

to enter into its work ; in other words, if it will record accurately sounds which are intended to be preserved, it will also record all other sounds which come within its range.

### Third Inquiry.

*Do we guarantee employment to persons whom we teach ?*

ANSWER.—We certainly do not. But we have never known any of our students who were prepared for this business under our instruction to go without employment ; in other words, the field being sufficiently open for any number of competent persons, our students have always found employment. This inquiry evidently arises from certain advertisements, widely published, which guarantee employment. The holding out of any such guaranty as is here referred to must, in our opinion, always be unfair and oftentimes dishonest, and is a guaranty which no person could by any possibility carry out.

### Fourth Inquiry.

*What is the inducement that we hold out to our Students ?*

ANSWER.—I. It is a most valuable accomplishment to any intelligent person who may desire to use it, if only for private purposes.

2. It will enable a large number of well educated and intelligent persons, both young men and young women, to obtain employment when almost all other avenues of business are closed to them.

For instance, there are more persons competent to keep books and more persons competent to teach school by tens of thousands than there are places for them. Short-hand is a business requiring good instruction by competent persons, and a fair degree of aptitude and intelligence on the part of the student. If properly instructed in the theory and practice of Short-hand a reasonable amount of time will enable the student to be useful for business purposes, and the salaries paid for this kind of work average an amount very much above the average salary of school teachers or clerks in general.

Honestly stated, it is not and cannot be a high road to a large salary of five or six thousand a year to the average student. But Short-hand writers are every year more and more extensively employed for legal reporting and for general purposes.

We require that every person taught by us shall give some sort of evidence that we can do justice to them and to ourselves by taking them as students; to any person taught by us we can safely say that a satisfactory, and even a handsome, return will come to them for the time and for the comparatively small amount of money expended.



## Fifth Inquiry.

*Why is it better to employ us rather than some one else?*

ANSWER.—That depends on who the other person may be. Other good teachers can be named. But here is the undoubted advantage which we offer and which we think no other establishment does offer, viz., that our teachers have been for many years, and are now, engaged in the business of verbatim stenographic reporting in the City of New York, and the instruction which they give is necessarily practical and competent in every respect. I think it certain that ours is the only establishment in this country doing an extensive business in reporting in the Courts and in general practice, *and at the same time teaching Short-hand.*

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## Our Agreement.

1. We agree that students may take any amount of time to complete their work that their individual circumstances reasonably require.

B. O. BAKER  
LAWYER  
DALLAS TEXAS

VIII.

PRACTICAL SHORT-HAND.

2. We agree that each student shall have separate instruction and direction.

3. We agree with all who receive instruction from us that when they have completed the course we give, they will be able to write Short-hand well.

For information upon any question relating to the subject, write to us, or call between 10 and 3 at our business office.

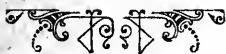
JAMES H. FISH,

*First Floor, No. 229 Broadway, New York.*

Official Stenographer to the United States Admiralty Courts in New York and Brooklyn, and the U. S. Circuit Court in Brooklyn.



*Fish's School of Short-Hand, 186 Remsen  
Street, Brooklyn; Franklin Building, near  
Court Street. Prospectus, page 33.*



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LAWYER  
DALLAS TEXAS



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